

E - 71,238

S - 62,154

'Spying' on the C

Another insider's tell-all book has been written about a government agency that, it is to be presumed, was naive enough to expect a certain degree of loyalty from its employees.

Patrick J. McGarvey claims he has written about the Central Intelligence Agency, with which he spent three years, as a service to the public. He wants to "shed some light on the myth that the CIA is an efficient well-run machine capable of almost any act of intrigue."

But why did McGarvey call the book, "CIA—The Myth and The Madness," when most of the content is not about the CIA at all but about other intelligence setups, notably in the Defense Department? This violence to fairness suggests that royalty checks, not civic-mindedness, motivated the author.

As for the CIA's comeuppance from a one-time operative, it seems the agency actually purloined the sputnik from under the noses of its guardians, and dismantled and photographed it before returning same to the exhibition chamber. So what? Small return, we would say, for the priceless nuclear fission secrets the Soviet

Union gained by the more devious and scurrilous method of bribing U.S. citizens.

The book details how Director Richard Helms of the CIA has telephones of subordinates tapped, how stiff are the penalties for leaving around a single scrap of paper and how armed guards patrol CIA corridors in darkness. There are some who may believe such precautions especially necessary in view of McGarvey's flight into print with data from the boss' files.

McGarvey thinks the CIA is an inept "morass." A former FBI agent-turned-author thinks the FBI is inept. Congressional hearing rooms have no trouble getting a Vietnam veteran to denounce the services (and one, John F. Kerry, is capitalizing on his expose by bidding for Congress in Massachusetts' 5th District).

Isn't it possible, we wonder, that these services and these agencies are doing their level best to serve the nation and its people and that the best available brains and integrity—including loyalty—are sweating at the task?

There are deficiencies, it goes without saying, and errors, and misjudgments. The CIA is especially vulnerable to a critic, since it doesn't discuss its successes or its errors. (Although it is worth noting that the agency deleted only 100 lines from the manuscript McGarvey submitted under a secrecy pact he signed when hired, and which he appears to be violating in spirit if not in letter.)

But too many critics like McGarvey seem to have forgotten that in appraising what happens in war, or in intelligence work, one must start with the basic premise that war is hell and spying is a dirty business. Criticism of a high-level supersecret agency like the CIA that does not document incompetence at the top, or venality, is no public service, and may well be a disservice.

STATINTL

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